THE TENTH DAY.

Friday, the 14th March 1930.

The Assembly met again at 11-30 A. M. on Friday the 14th March 1930, the Dewan presiding.

153. Grievances of the backward and depressed communities.

MR. M. S. ANIRUDHAN (*Municipal Council, Alleppey*) said that the depressed classes did not possess full civic freedom, even though they played a very significant part in the agricultural and industrial development of the country. Some public roads and schools were not open to members of those communities. It was, indeed, noteworthy that one of those schools was situated at the Capital. It might be said of Government that they stood in the way of reform, notwithstanding the existence of a large volume of public opinion in favour of it. The attitude of Government in relation to such matters was very clearly demonstrated during the discussion in the Legislative Council on Mr. Damodaran Asan's resolution about the need for throwing open every public road and *satram* to all communities. Government opposed the resolution with all the force that they could muster.

In such matters it was the duty of Government to lead public opinion. The Sarda Act of British India would not have found a place in the Statute Book but for the active co-operation of the Government of India.

Though all the departments, excepting, of course, the Devaswom Department, were theoretically open to all classes and communities, they remained practically closed to members of the depressed classes. Of the 503 Gazetted appointments carrying a pay of Rs. 150 and above, 170 went to Tamil Brahmins, 129 to Nairs, 147 to Christians, 5 to Ezhavas and 4 to Mussalmans. The above figures sufficiently vindicated the clamour made by the unrepresented communities for adequate representation and preferential treatment.

The Pulayas and Parayas stood in need of large concessions. Their children should be educated free and provided with food every noon at the expense of the State.

Qualified members of the depressed classes should be more liberally entertained in the several departments, particularly in the Judicial, Revenue, Police and Excise Departments.

Ezhavas should be more freely entertained in the Education, Excise and Co-operative Departments. Among the graduate teachers of departmental schools, there was only one Ezhava.

The distribution of appointments among the qualified members of the several communities was indeed a difficult problem. A definite

policy should be laid down once for all, for the guidance of Government and the heads of departments. Government would do well to adopt the communal formula enunciated by the High Court for the recruitment of Munsiffs.

The member, in conclusion, said that the depressed classes entertained high hopes of the Dewan and trusted that, before the Assembly met again, most of their grievances would have been redressed. The depressed classes would always co-operate heartily with Government in order to make the administration successful.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Anirudhan, I should thank you, on behalf of the Government, for the assurance contained in the last sentence of your representation, that the communities, which are classed as depressed or backward in Travancore, would heartily co-operate with the Government to make the administration successful.

As regards your last point, that is, the enunciation of a definite policy as regards communal representation, as I said yesterday, I shall hear all the suggestions that the various members who, propose to speak on that subject, have to make, before I give my answer.

With regard to some of your definite suggestions, *viz.*, that schools, roads and *satrams* should be thrown open to all classes of people, I may tell you that you have misread the attitude of the Government in the matter. You seem to have misunderstood the trend of the discussion at the last session of the Legislative Council when you say that the Government opposed the request with all the power at their command. As a matter of fact, if you had followed the proceedings closely, you would have found that the Government were in absolute sympathy with that request of the backward classes and tried to make the House understand that, as a matter of fact, the inequalities had been removed to a very great extent, and that, even in the few cases where any prohibition was still retained, the Government were trying to find means to remove such prohibition or rather the causes that were at the root of such prohibition.

As regards the schools, there is practically no restriction against the admission of pupils from all classes of people, to our schools and colleges. As I said in reply to a representation yesterday, there are only 12 schools in which students from the depressed classes are not admitted and there are special reasons as regards each one of them. Government are trying to reduce the number of such schools gradually, and hope, before long, to have no schools to which admission will be denied.

In the same way, in regard to roads and *satrams* also, Government expect gradually to remove the prohibition still further.

Then, you wanted qualified members of the depressed classes to be given appointments in the various departments of the State. As a matter of fact, you know that it is the policy of the Government to give equality of opportunities to all communities and that even now there is no prohibition against the entertainment of members of any of

these classes in any department except the Devaswom Department where non-Hindus and non-caste Hindus cannot be admitted. But, you say that the policy of giving appointments to these people is not sufficiently liberal in the sense that a sufficient number of people to satisfy your demands do not get appointments. Well, I shall deal with that later.

You then mentioned the question of supplying noon-day food free to the pupils of the depressed classes. That has been the subject of representation here on previous occasions also; and you will find from my predecessor's reply that the financial aspect of that question has to be considered. You know that non-official gentlemen have made charitable endowments and, as an instance, I may mention to you the name of Rao Sahib T. Padmanabha Rao who has made a liberal endowment for the supply of midday meals to poor students. I hope that philanthropic, public-spirited and rich citizens of Travancore would come forward with more endowments and thus make it easy for the Government to fill up the gaps that would still be left.

154. Some Suggestions for the elevation of the Depressed Classes.

MR. AIYAPPAN MADHAVAN (*Municipal Council, Vaikam*) said that the elevation of the depressed classes was one of the serious tasks which confronted Government. Several things remained to be done for the achivement of the task. Since the time of Dewan Mr. (later Sir) P. Rajagopalachari, nothing very much had been done for the uplift of the weaker communities.

Members of the depressed classes should be entertained as liberally as possible in the various departments, without much regard to educational requirements. The causes that operated against the educational progress of those communities were removed by Government only very recently. There were several appointments in the gift of Government and of the departmental heads which did not require any particular educational qualification or technical knowledge. Such appointments should invariably be offered to Pulayas and Parayas who could read and write Malayalam. In particular, the lower ranks of the Excise and Police Departments should be filled by those men. Other considerations should not be allowed to over-ride the claims of the depressed classes for minor appointments.

Government followed a policy of drift and left everything to the heads of departments who rarely did well by those communities. Seven Pulaya youths who passed the Vernacular School Leaving Examination some years ago were still unemployed.

Schools, *satrams* and other public institutions should be thrown open to all classes of people, without exception.

The children of Pulayas and Parayas should be given scholarships and fee concessions. They should also be fed once a day at the cost of Government.

Primary education should be made compulsory among the depressed classes.